

28 January

Fr CHARLES FUCHS

13 May 1839 – 21 January 1880

Charles Fuchs was forty when he died at Old Tati, the first station of the Zambezi Mission. Fr Law wrote magnanimously, ‘I suppose the German Provincial could not possibly have known the state of ill-health of Fr Fuchs when he sent him on this mission – he was a perfect invalid in Europe.’

Born in Kenten in 1839, Fuchs was ordained in 1864 and joined the Society in 1865. He served in the Prussian army medical corps during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 but soon after had to leave Germany due to the *Kulturkampf*. He worked in England and France before volunteering for the Zambezi Mission.

Fr Blanca cared for him and Br Paravicini - both had fever (malaria) - at Old Tati. He wrote, ‘On the 27th I gave him the Viaticum. On the morning of that day he felt a little better, but after dinner the sickness gradually grew worse... After midnight I began to recite the prayers of the agonizing and the good father answered very distinctly until 1.20 in the night when he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord, leaving me alone with another sick one ...’

In 2004, Bishop Frank Nubusah SVD of Francistown, Botswana, went with two other priests and a Jesuit to the spot where Fuchs and his fellow Jesuit, Fr Anthony de Wit, were buried at Old Tati. Their graves had been located by archaeologist Robert Burrett. The bishop celebrated the Eucharist there in thanksgiving for these men, the first to come to what was then his diocese, and he planned to build a shrine in their honour, stating that they were the founders of the Church in Botswana. Bishop Nubusah has since been moved to Gaborone but the plans are ongoing.

